

Inspection of St James' Pre-School (Petts Wood)

James The Great RC Church Hall, Lakeswood Road, Petts Wood, Orpington BR5 1BJ

Inspection date: 30 June 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff know the children and their families well and greet children warmly as they arrive at this pre-school. Children are eager to explore the learning environment and get involved in play. Staff use observations to plan effectively for children's learning. Children demonstrate that they feel safe and secure in their surroundings and with staff. For example, they snuggle into staff if they are tired or upset. Children enthusiastically invite staff to join in their play. For example, they play imaginatively at the construction area, organising the next call to fix leaks around the pre-school. Staff place an emphasis on children's emotional well-being. This helps children to settle and feel comfortable in the pre-school.

Staff plan a well-sequenced curriculum for all children, to address any gaps in their learning. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who need support with their communication and language development make good progress from their starting points.

Staff are good role models and teach children to care for each other, share and take turns during play. Children understand the expectations of them and respond positively to staff members. Children behave well.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Staff sequence the curriculum so that children can explore, practise and learn new skills. They frequently encourage children to recall previous learning, check children's understanding and help them learn more over time. For example, children excitedly remember the word 'cocoon' and what to feed them when looking at the caterpillars in the net. Staff expertly extend this knowledge later when explaining that the caterpillar is camouflaged to protect itself. Children show great pride in their new learning.
- Staff support children's language and communication skills. They model correct pronunciation and introduce new vocabulary. Children enjoy songs and rhymes and joining in with actions. However, staff often ask too many questions and in quick succession. They do not always observe children's play to ensure that questions are relevant and helpful to extend learning even further.
- Children thoroughly enjoy a range of activities inside and outside. They are keen to join in and they show excitement in their learning. Children keenly listen to instructions during a shopping game, eagerly taking turns. Staff support children during water play as they experiment how fast the water runs along the gully. Others test how fast the cars can roll down the ramp.
- Staff help children to develop a broad understanding of mathematical concepts. They assist children to count and understand individual numbers. For example, children excitedly match the correct number of trains at the numbered platform,

explaining which has more carriages. Staff introduce vocabulary such as taller and tallest as children build towers with foam bricks. This teaching supports children's mathematical development.

- Overall, staff deployment is effective. Staff engage with children as they play and extend their learning. However, there are times when staff do not fully support all children. This is because, on occasion, staff are busy with routine activities, such as preparing for the next activity and focusing on their group of children and activity. When this happens, there are children who are not engaged in meaningful learning activities. This results in an unsettled learning environment.
- Staff teach children about healthy lifestyles. Staff talk with children about the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables at snack time. Staff promote the importance of keeping hydrated, especially on very hot days. Children develop an understanding of keeping healthy.
- Parents speak positively about the pre-school and staff. They say that their children enjoy attending and that the staff are kind and caring. Staff are good at creating a two-way flow of information with parents, where ideas to support learning at home are consistently shared.
- Staff work well as a team. Leaders support staff's well-being and ensure they feel appreciated. This helps them in fulfilling their roles and developing their practice. Staff attend training to improve their knowledge and skills further, to support better outcomes for children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- develop knowledge of using effective questioning as a teaching strategy, to extend children's thinking, communication and language skills
- review staff deployment so children are better supported and engage well in their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY476213
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10398113
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	23
Name of registered person	St James' Preschool (Pettswood) CIO
Registered person unique reference number	RP533569
Telephone number	07815464837
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2019

Information about this early years setting

St James' Pre-School (Petts Wood) registered in 2014 and is located in Petts Wood, in the London Borough of Bromley. The pre-school opens four days a week during term time. Sessions are from 9am until 12.15pm on Tuesday and Friday, and from 9am until 15.45 pm on Monday and Thursday. The management committee employs five members of staff. Of these, three hold level 3 and two hold level 2 qualifications. The pre-school offers funding for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tracey Murphy

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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